

Providing breast milk for your baby in the NICU

In the beginning most premature babies will be too small to feed by mouth. By pumping or hand expressing your breast milk, you can ensure that your baby will still receive all the nutrition they need.



photo: Fabiana Bacchini

Breast milk provides magical benefits:

Human milk is the ideal food for your baby!

It contains healthy fats and proteins that can help support your baby's overall health and well-being.



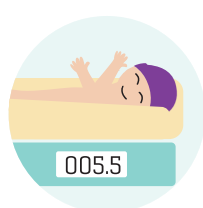
boosts immunity, provides antibodies



receives good gut bacteria



supports brain development



supports growth

Important to know:

There are benefits for you too!

Producing breast milk can help regulate your hormones and reduce risks of breast and other cancers.

Providing breast milk to your baby can also make you feel empowered as a parent!

Let's get started!

Hand expression can help express colostrum (first milk), but if your baby can't yet breast/chest feed, using a breast pump is best for helping your milk "come in" and, for making a long-term milk supply. If you hand express, make sure you pump afterwards to get these benefits.

Signal your body

Starting soon after you give birth sends a strong message to your body to start producing milk.

Pump often

It is best to pump breast milk at least 8 times in 24 hours (every 2 to 3 hours).

Use Skin-to-Skin

This special way of holding your baby stimulates specific hormones in your body that produces more breast milk.

Ask your baby's nurse about Skin-to-Skin

Colostrum is 'liquid gold' as it has extra health benefits for your baby!

Your breast milk is unique to you, made just for your baby. **Even one drop of colostrum has antibodies and healthy bacteria that can boost your baby's health.** Ask your baby's nurse or lactation consultant about putting drops of colostrum in your baby's mouth.

Did you know?

As your baby grows, your breast milk will change to meet your baby's needs.

Providing breast milk for your baby is so important. There are many supports available. There are also breast milk donor programs available.

Ask your baby's nurse, or lactation consultant.



Visit us online for more information on providing breast milk plus other useful resources and programs focused on premature babies and their families.

Thanks to Medela for their support towards our educational program.

CPBF  Canadian Premature Babies Foundation

canadianpreemies.org